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February 29, 2008

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CDFAC, a nonprofit national children's advocacy group, said Representative Melancon voted to protect the health and well being of Louisiana's children 100 percent of the time. Representative Melancon achieved this distinction by voting to support the first increase in the minimum wage in a decade, access and quality improvements in Head Start, and additional funds for student loans.

"Our children deserve every chance to succeed in life, and I hope that by supporting pro-family legislation in Congress I am helping to improve their odds," said Rep. Melancon. "From increasing access to health care and early childhood education, to reducing the debt our children and grandchildren will inherit, these bills invest in Louisiana's future generations and I am proud to support them. I thank the CDFAC for their decades of work on children's issues and look forward to continuing to fight alongside them to help make sure more children grow up happy and healthy."

"I applaud Representative Melancon for his commitment to improving the lives of children in Louisiana," said CDFAC President Marian Wright Edelman. "With 9.4 million uninsured children in America and nearly 13 million living in poverty, it is critical that we have Representatives committed to making children a priority. Representative Melancon is a dedicated advocate for children and has truly earned the distinction of being one of the best Representatives for children."

The Children's Defense Fund Action Council educates the nation about the needs of children and encourages preventative investment before they get sick or into trouble, drop out of school, or suffer family breakdown. The CDF Action Council began in 1969 and is a private, non-profit organization that has never taken government funds.

CDFAC developed an interactive map and other online tools to show how Members of Congress voted by state. To see the interactive map as well as the 2007 Congressional Scorecard in its entirety, which includes the grades of all Members of Congress, visit: www.cdfactioncouncil.org

The key votes the CDFAC rated Members on are described below.

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Key House of Representatives 2007 Children's Votes

1. Support Pay-As-You-Go Rules for Taxes and Spending

Adoption of the Rules of the House of Representatives for the 110th Congress, Title IV, PAYGO Rules

Passed 280-152 (R 48-152, D 232-0) on January 5, 2007. Adopted as House Rule.

Vote Description: This resolution set House rules for the 110th Congress. The title includes pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) rules, which require that any new tax cuts or additional funding for programs that entitle eligible individuals to certain benefits or services, such as Medicaid and the federal Foster Care Program, be paid for by reductions in spending or tax increases. It also requires Members of Congress to provide information about the recipient and purpose of federal funding earmarked for specific purposes.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. It is unjust to approve tax cuts that are not paid for and that add billions of dollars to our children's debt burden.

2. Increase the Minimum Wage

Fair Minimum Wage Act of 2000, H.R. 2

Passed 315-116 (R 82-116, D 233-0) on January 10, 2007. Enacted in P. L. 110-28.

Vote Description: This bill raised the minimum wage from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour over two years, the first increase in the minimum wage in 10 years.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. This bill passed into law a long overdue increase in pay for minimum wage workers. A vote for this bill was a vote to help struggling low-income families with children.

3. 2008 Budget Resolution

Concurrent Resolution on the Budget for Fiscal Year 2008, S. Con. Res. 21, Conference Report

Agreed to 214-209 (R 0-196, D 214-13) on May 17, 2007.

Vote Description: The Conference Report on the Fiscal Year 2008 Budget Resolution allowed up to \$954.1 billion in discretionary spending, plus \$145.2 billion for operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. It reinstated pay-as-you-go (PAYGO) rules in the Senate and set up a mechanism in the House to block tax cuts if the projected surplus in fiscal year 2012 does not materialize.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. The Budget Resolution included important funding priorities for children, including up to \$50 billion in additional funding for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). It also rejected many of the cuts the President had proposed for the 2008 budget, including cuts in other important health and education programs for children.

4. Protect Children from Unsafe Medications

Food and Drug Administration Amendments Act, H.R. 2900
Passed 403-16 (R 187-6, D 216-10) on July 11, 2007.

Vote Description: This bill would revise and extend Food and Drug Administration (FDA) programs to ensure the safety of prescription drugs and medical devices and expand the FDA's ability to review the safety of prescription drugs and track problems after they have been approved and marketed.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. This legislation would help protect children from unsafe medication. It includes critical provisions that would greatly increase the amount and quality of information doctors need to safely prescribe medication to children. It also would provide incentives to drug companies to conduct responsible testing to determine prescription drug safety and dosage requirements, since children react to medications very differently than adults.

5. Extend Health Coverage to 4.1 Million More Uninsured Children

Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act, H.R. 3162
Passed 225-204 (R 5-194, D 220-10) on August 1, 2007.

Vote Description: The Children's Health and Medicare Protection Act (CHAMP Act) would have reauthorized SCHIP for five years and increased federal funding for child health coverage through SCHIP and Medicaid by nearly \$50 billion over five years. The CHAMP Act would be funded by a 41 cent per pack federal cigarette tax increase and reductions in overpayments to private Medicare plans.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. The CHAMP Act was the strongest child health

coverage legislation passed by the House in 2007 and would have extended health coverage to 4.1 million of the more than nine million uninsured children in America. The CHAMP Act included critical new funding and policy improvements needed by states to enroll and provide health coverage to millions of children who are currently eligible but not enrolled in SCHIP or Medicaid.

6. Help Youth Pay for College

College Cost Reduction and Access Act of 2007, H.R. 2669, Conference Report Agreed to 292-97 (R 77-97, D 215-0) on September 7, 2007. Enacted as P. L. 110-084.

Vote Description: This Conference Report redirected federal funding from student loan firm to aid for students and college graduates. It also increased Pell grant awards and improved debt forgiveness provisions for certain public-sector workers.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. A yes vote on this Conference Report was a vote for children because it increased opportunities for youth to go to college, especially youth from lower-income families.

7. Extend Health Coverage to 3.1 Million More Uninsured Children

Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act, H.R. 976, Motion to Concur with Senate

Passed 265-159 (R 45-151, D 220-8) on September 25, 2007.

Vetoed by President Bush on October 3, 2007.

Vote Description: The bill would reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) for five years and increase federal funding for child health coverage through SCHIP and Medicaid by nearly \$35 billion over five years. It would be funded by a 61 cent per pack federal cigarette tax increase.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. This bill would extend health coverage to one-third (3.1 million) of the more than nine million uninsured children in America. It includes funding and policy improvements needed by states to enroll and provide health coverage to millions of children who are currently eligible but not enrolled in SCHIP or Medicaid.

8. Fund Child Health and Education

Departments of Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2008, H.R. 3043,

Motion to Concur

Passed 274-141 (R 51-141, D 223-0) on November 8, 2007.
Vetoed by President Bush on November 13, 2007.

Vote Description: This bill would provide \$150.7 billion in fiscal year 2008 for specific programs in the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education and related agencies.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. This bill would have helped children by providing some funding increases for key health, mental health, education, and job training programs and rejecting cuts proposed by the President in other important programs for children.

9. Support Tax Relief for Low-Income Families with Children

Temporary Tax Relief Act, H.R. 3996

Passed 216-193 (R 0-185, D 216-8) on November 9, 2007.

Vote Description: This bill would exempt more than 20 million taxpayers from having to pay the alternative minimum tax on income from 2007. It would also expand eligibility in 2008 for the refundable child tax credit.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. This bill would expand the child tax credit to low-income families, increasing the incomes of the families with children who are struggling the most to make ends meet. A vote for the bill was a vote for children.

10. Give Children a Head Start

Improving Head Start for School Readiness Act, H.R. 142, Conference Report

Agreed to 381-36 (R 154-36, D 227-0) on November 14, 2007. Enacted as P. L. No. 110-134.

Vote Description: This Conference Report expanded access to Head Start for more children, prioritized expansion of the Early Head Start Program, and made other improvements for the youngest children in the program. It also required quality improvements, including new associate and bachelor degree requirements for teachers and increased annual in-service training, and improved coordination between Head Start and other programs for young children.

CDF Action Council Position: Yes. A vote for the improvements in Head Start, which has successfully served children for more than four decades, was a vote to help children get ready for school.